2: Howell M-5 (ca. 1908)1908-1910
OC6 Iban OC6

# The Dyak feasts called "Ijok" or "Ijau Pumpong" or "Sandong Lau"; "Gawai Gajah" or "Begajah" and "Gawai Ranyai" or "Beranyai."

By Revd. Wm. Howell.

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These feasts, in the order stated, are considered amongst Dyaks to be the greatest they can hold. Five feasts are connected with the taking of heads in war *viz*: *Gawai Enchabuarong* and *Gawai Tenyelang* and the three above mentioned, but these three

[p. 91]

796 were seldom held in the olden days and in the
178 present day are scarcely ever heard of owing to the peaceful state of the country under the rule of His Highness the Rajah and the present generation is almost entirely ignorant even of their existence, though one of the feasts—*Gawai Gajah*—was held by a certain Skrang Dyak who lived in the vicinity of Sabu some twenty-one years ago.

796 Should a man take a head or two in war he claims
727 the right to himself conduct the feast *Betenyelang*
555 and he takes the prominent position and is considered a person of distinction though rather like the mayorship of an English town the position is only maintained at considerable expense.

Nowadays when peace reigns instead of feud the thirst for honour and glory compels many adventurous young bloods to incur the expense of holding the *Betenyelang* feast in the expectation of being rewarded by the gods with heads should there be an expedition and consequently the *Betenyelang* feast is more commonly held now than it was in former days.

727 The ancient custom permitted a man to hold
796 the *Ijok* or *Ijau Pumpong* feast only after he had taken a number of heads and had celebrated the *Betenyelang* feast several times. The nature of the feasts is somewhat similar to that of *Betenyelang* differing only in that a jar of native spirit *(tuak)* is placed on the top of a high pole. The reason for this is quite unknown to the Dyaks of today but it may be presumed to be an offering to the god of war *(Singalang Burong)* with which to quench his thirst.

The *Gawai Gajah* is a more important feast than that of *Ijau Pumpong*. A figure meant to represent an elephant or a dragon is set at the top of a long pole and the nature of the feast is somewhat similar to those of *Betenyelang* and *Ijau Pumpong*.

The greatest of all the feasts is the one called *Gawai Ranyai* or *Beranyai*. At this feast all the heads are collected and placed in a winnowing basket or *chapan* and spears are hung round it suspended by means of cords. A distinguished warrior in full fighting dress sits beneath the suspended spears and another man of war cuts away
[178] the cords by which they are hanging. The general nature of the feast is very similar to the others but it's existence even is not known by the Dyaks of to-day and it's very name will be unknown to the next generation.

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6

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*The* NATIVES *of* BORNEO. Edited from the Papers of the late BROOKE LOW, Esq., by H. LING ROTH.

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II. LAND TENURE AND CULTIVATION; HABITATIONS; SLAVES; DRESS, PERSONAL ORNAMENT AND FASHIONABLE DEFORMITY; HUNTING; FISHING; NAVIGATION; WEAPONS AND WAR-DRESS; AGGRESSIVE WARFARE; DEFENSIVE WARFARE, HEADS; CAPTIVES; CANNIBALISM; MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND SINGING.

### 1.—*Land Tenure and Cultivation.*

425 As regards the tenure by which land is held, it has been the
427 immemorial custom that when a person fells the virgin forest,
he acquires by that act a perpetual title to the land. It is his
● 178 from henceforth to do with as he pleases; he may sell it, or lend
it, or let it. The rent he is empowered to demand may not exceed
in value a dollar, and must be either a game-cock, or a sucking-
pig, or a couple of plates. But as land is rising in value every
year, and old jungle is becoming scarcer and scarcer, there is a

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 OC6 Iban OC6



marked tendency among the tribes to demand a heavier rent—in fact several dollars a year. The tenure, too, has been modified within late years in view of the increasing demand for accommodation, and it is now generally understood that when the proprietor chooses to leave the district and remove into a distant country he forfeits, by so doing, all title to the ground and can no longer exact rent.

Agriculture with the Sea Dyaks is in a very backward condition, but they contrast very favourably with the Malay population in the vicinity. Neither use the plough nor buffalo, but the former cultivate on a more extensive scale and with a more provident idea. They grow, both individually and collectively, far more than they require for their own consumption, and with the residue they purchase necessaries, such as salt, steel, iron, and luxuries, such as personal ornaments, for their families. If the harvest has been really plentiful they are even able to afford to purchase gongs and toddy, and perhaps a jar or two.

As a rule they prefer to cultivate hilly soil, but some few have learnt to utilize the wet land. Their farming operations are regulated by the position in the heavens of the Seven Stars of the Pleiades. They commence business towards the end of the dry season, July and August, so that they have the wet monsoon to bring the paddy to maturity, and the beginning of the following fine weather, April and May, to ripen the grain.

The old jungle is called *kampong*, and the new is called *temuda*. The Dyaks prefer infinitely to farm the former whenever it is to be obtained within reasonable distance of the village, and when it is getting scarce in their immediate neighbourhood they shift their residence nearer to it. In parts of the country more populous than others, it frequently happens that the Dyaks have not in their territory any old jungle; such situations are not so laborious to prepare, but being destitute of the rich layer of vegetable mould and the fertilizing properties of burnt wood, are not nearly so productive. After having felled the old jungle and farmed on it once, they leave it for seven years to grow up again and are then ready to use it a second time. The first year's growth is called *kruaoh*.

When it is intended to open out new country, the first thing to be done is for every family to select an eligible piece of forest land and to mark out the quantity they wish to cultivate. The next step is to *beburong*, that is to say to consult the omen birds of the tribe to learn whether or no they approve of this choice. For this purpose they erect a hut first in one quarter then in another of the land in question, and wait upon the birds for

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6



721 Again, it was customary in some tribes to bring home
782 a head as an offering to the spirits when a new village
361 was to be built.

Both these customs are no longer observed. At
●178 the feast in honour of the dead—*Begawai Antu*—the headman of the house generally cuts open the bundles of finery that have been put away, and at the building of a new house the killing of a pig is supposed to be sufficient to satisfy the demands of the spirits.

721 It is presumed that a man who has secured a human head must necessarily be brave. But this need not be
577 the case at all, for, as has been said, the head of a woman or child will serve the purpose. And these heads need not be obtained in open warfare. Very often the head of an enemy is taken while he is asleep. Nor is it necessary that a man should kill his victim with his own hand. Frequently many of his friends assist him in killing some unfortunate man whom they have waylaid, and then he comes home with the head, and poses as a hero!

721 It was customary in the old days to announce an expedition that one tribe intended to take against another at one of their feasts, when the village was thronged with guests from far and near. Some great Chief would advance his reason for the intended attack. Either some of his people had been slain, and revenge was called for, or else they wished to put off their mourning, and for that required a human head taken in war. Perhaps the reason was that they intended to build a new village house, and so required some human heads to use as offerings to the spirit of the land; or possibly he himself wished to marry, and wanted a head as a

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6



the enemy who saw the bodies would know that they were not slaves, but free men of some standing.

In the present day, under the rule of Rajah Brooke, no Sea Dyaks may go out on a fighting expedition unless called out for that purpose by the Government. I remember not long ago that there were some rebels in the upper reaches of the Batang Lupar River, who had been guilty of many murders, and would not submit to the Government. After trying milder measures without any effect, it was decided to take a force into their country, and the Government sent round the War Spear to let the people of the different villages know they were to be ready to go on expedition at a certain date. I happened to be in a Dyak village in the Krian. It was evening, and I was seated on a mat in the open veranda of the house, and round me were seated a crowd of men and women, whom I was trying to teach. A man arrived at the house with a spear decorated with red cloth. At first no one noticed him. He spoke to a man near the top of the ladder of the house. The man came up to the middle of the house, where I was seated, and said something which I did not quite catch. At once the whole crowd got up and left me. They listened eagerly to what the man who brought the spear had to say. I was not left long in doubt of what it all meant. The message the man brought was short and to the point: "You are to be ready with your war-boats, and be at Simanggang at the next full moon. There is to be an expedition up the river."

It is difficult for me to describe the change that came over the crowd. The headman of the house at once asked a youth to carry on the spear to the next house with the same message. The men at once discussed the question of war-boats, and it was decided there and then

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6



843 vented, and no evil effects follow. For instance, the mother may do basket-work and make mats, provided some other woman begin the work for her, and the man may dig trenches or erect a hut provided the hands of others are first laid to it. A man may not kill an animal yet, if he does kill anything, and runs away and then returns a few minutes afterwards, and makes some remark like this aloud, "I wonder who killed this animal?" he has nothing to fear.

These curious restrictions are more or less similar among the different tribes. It is probable that they are founded on some theory of sympathy. Man, woman, and unborn or newborn babe are all linked together by some unseen bond, and, accordingly, the wrong action of one may result in harm to the others.

The whole period of a woman's pregnancy is passed in fear lest the spirits (*antu*) should do harm to her or her unborn babe. If the mother has a bad dream or hears a bird of ill omen, at once a fowl is sacrificed to propitiate the spirits.

Should the husband wilfully violate any of the restrictions, the wife's relations immediately bring him to justice, and, according to Dyak law, he has to pay a fine.

843 ●178 Some years ago Bishop Hose, accompanied by a missionary, visited Ginsurai, one of the villages in the Saribas. The Christians there had built for themselves a small chapel, where services were held. In the evening, when the Dyaks were sitting together in the *ruai* of the Dyak house talking to the Bishop and his companion, the question arose as to whether the attending of public worship should be included among the many restrictions imposed upon a pregnant woman. The wife of the headman

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6



in the house was a great invalid, and she gave her opinion on the matter. "I think," she said, "a woman in that state should be allowed to come to public worship. It is just the time she needs it most. You men have so much to engage your attention, and go out to your work. I am an invalid, and am left at home ill. I often go by myself into our little chapel and say the Lord's Prayer, and I find it is a great consolation to me. A pregnant woman, who is perhaps feeling ill and low-spirited, ought to be allowed to join in public prayers." Not so very long after she spoke in this way this woman, Manja's wife, died. Let us hope that there are many others in Borneo who, like herself, have learnt to rely on a Higher Power in time of need.

When the time of delivery is near, and the woman is in travail, two or three older women come in and attend to her.

Should any difficulty occur in the delivery of the child the *manangs*, or witch-doctors, are called in. One takes charge of the proceedings in the lying-in room, while the others remain outside in the *ruai*, or common veranda. The *manang* inside the room winds a loop of cloth around the woman above the womb. One of the *manangs* outside wraps his body around in the same manner, but first places within the folds of a cloth a large stone. A long incantation is then sung by the *manangs* outside, while the one within the room strives to force the child downward, and so hasten delivery. If he succeed in doing this, he draws down upon it the loop of cloth, and twists it tightly around the mother's body, so as to prevent the upward return of the child. A shout from him proclaims his success to his companions outside, and the *manang* who is personating the mother moves the loop of cloth

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6



wondrously beautiful. But the inhabitants of Hades cannot understand what it all means, and quarrel among themselves. Then an old learned woman, who has lived in Hades very many years, speaks. She bids them be silent and listen to her, and she explains that the bird has come from the land of the living with presents for them from their earthly friends.

Until this *Pana* is made, the Dyaks say the soul of the dead man is unsettled. It has not quite left this world, and Hades will not receive it or give it food and drink. But after this observance it is received and welcomed as a regular denizen of the spirit world.

There is another observance called *Sumping*, which is sometimes carried out at a varying period after death. The Dyaks bring the symbols and trophies of a head-hunting raid and place them in the middle of the public hall of the house. The wailer sings her incantation, and procures the services of the Spirit of the Winds to convey them to the dead, whose abode, until now full of discomfort and darkness, becomes at sight of these trophies filled with light. The spirits rejoice at the thought that their relatives have revenged upon others their own death.

This observance, according to ancient custom, could not be held until the head of an enemy had been obtained. It brings out the darker and fiercer side of the Dyak nature. They would fight with Death if they could, and rescue their dead friends from his clutches. But as they cannot do this, they rejoice in taking vengeance upon the living and killing someone, so that their relatives in Hades may have the satisfaction of saying: "My death has been avenged. A life has been paid for my life." In these days, when the Dyaks live under a strong and just

7:Gomes M-5 (ca. 1890)1911 OC6 Iban OC6



Government, it is very seldom that this observance can be carried out according to ancient custom; now they have either to dispense with the newly-procured human head or omit the observance altogether.

The dead man is not forgotten. Periodical mournings (*sabak*) at intervals of two or three months are held in his memory, and the professional wailer calls on the dead man and weeps over him. The relatives work themselves up into a frenzy of sorrow on these occasions, and many of them are often seen weeping sadly. The Dyaks believe that the dead hear their cries, and that a bond of sympathy unites them with those on earth.

A year or two after the death the *Gawai Antu* is held. This feast is held in honour of all those that have died since the last *Gawai Antu* was held. Small, curiously-shaped baskets, supposed to represent the different implements a man or woman uses in work when alive, are made and placed on the different graves. Thus they furnish the dead with the means of livelihood in Hades. This feast ends all mourning for the dead, and after it has been held there are no more periodical mournings.

But even after all mourning has ceased the Dyak still believes that his dead friends and relatives live and visit the earth. Before going forth on an expedition against the enemy, the dead are invoked, and are begged to help their friends on earth, so that they may be successful against their foes. In times of peril and of need the dead are called upon; and on the hilltops or in the solitudes of the jungle a man often goes by himself and spends the night in the hope that the spirit of some dead relative may visit him, and in a dream tell him of some charm by means of which he may overcome difficulties and become rich and great.

11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6



inner edges of its lip) is 4 ins.[19] This makes it a vessel of about average size. Considerably large pots are to be found however. At Rumah Tungku, for example, we discovered one pot with a widest diameter of 12½ ins., and a diameter at its mouth of 6¼ ins. This pot was kept for a special purpose: the boiling of certain of the mordants with which cotton (in the *ikat* technique of the Iban) is treated. It had been made by a woman of Rumah Tungku named Binyong. In 1949, Binyong was about 58 years of age. She had made the pot many years before when carrying her eldest child Muli. Muli, in 1949, was a mature man with two children of his own, and we estimated that Binyong's large *priok* must have been at least 35 years old. It was still in excellent condition.

* * *

At the beginning of this paper I quoted evidence to show that as early as the 1890's the craft of pottery had become defunct among the Sea Dayaks of the Skrang River. Yet in 1949, the making of pots was still an active industry among the people of Rumah Tungku, as in various other Iban communities of the Baleh region. What were the circumstances which had brought this survival of an ancient craft into the mid-twentieth century?

First, obviously, there is the fact that in 1949 the Baleh was still a region where almost all of traditional Iban culture was extant. By 1949, true enough, there had been a number of innovations both in technology and economic arrangements, but these were still not on sufficient a scale to subvert the traditional Iban way of life. The majority of the men wore their hair in long tresses, were tattooed and clad in loin-clothes; while, ordinarily, the only garment of the women was a hand-woven skirt of their own making. But most important of all, the Baleh Iban were still pagan, adhering zealously to the elaborate system of activities and beliefs that constitute Iban religion. In short, the traditional Iban way of doing things was still valued above all else. Fundamentally, therefore, the problem of the survival of Iban pottery is but part of the wider problem of the survival of Iban culture in general. This is a major historical and cultural question which I do not propose to attempt to deal with here; there are, however, several specific circumstances which have intimately affected the survival of pottery, and these, I think, should perhaps be mentioned.

11:Freeman E-5 (1949-1951)1957 OC6 Iban OC6



323 177 178 462 First, the craft of pottery (except for the carving of the wooden beaters) is entirely in the hands of women. The existence of this division of labour is important, because, among the Iban, the women are markedly more conservative and tradition-bound than are the men. Because of the custom of *bejalai*[20] (the undertaking of journeys for material gain and social prestige), almost all Iban men acquire considerable experience of the outside world, as, for example, by working for a timber company in the Rejang delta or on the oil-fields of Brunei. It is through these sophisticated and travelled men that new ideas and values are introduced into Iban communities. The women, on the other hand, are 'stay-at-homes,' whose experience is limited (but for a very occasional visit to the local trading bazaar) to their own and neighbouring long-houses. These are the women who cling—so much more tenaciously than the men—to traditional ways of thought and action. It is understandable, therefore, that the crafts which are wholly in the hands of women, such as *ikat* weaving, basketry and pottery, are well preserved.

323 415 But there are also more particular reasons that account for the fact that earthenware pots are still being made by Iban women—although recepticles of brass, iron and aluminium can be purchased without difficulty in bazaars such as Kapit. The fact is that, for certain purposes, earthenware pots of Iban make are *preferred* to pots made from metal. The issue here is the utility which *priok tanah* have for the Iban, and it is important to note that this utility is not defined in purely monetary terms. That is, Iban preferences are not determined by the fact that other kinds of cooking vessels can be obtained 'more cheaply' than their own, but that for some purposes in the present estimation of the Iban of the Tiau their own *priok tanah* possess qualities not to be found elsewhere.[21] For example, it is recognized that certain kinds of [252] foods (such as some of the relishes, or *enkayu*, which the Iban eat with their rice) taste much the best if they are cooked in an Iban earthenware pot.[22] Thus, Uyang, a middle-aged man of Rumah Tungku, while standing and watching Runin modelling one of her pots, remarked quite spontaneously: *"Nyamai enkayu mandok alam priok tanah; manis, nadai bau lang."* ("How delicious are relishes cooked in an earthenware pot; they are sweet and without unpalatable taste.") We later found that Uyang had expressed a quite general opinion.

323 796 Finally, let me mention again those pots (such as the large pot made by Binyong of Rumah Tungku) which are used for the

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu



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178 Although there has been a long association between the Ibans and Sibu, the in-migration of relatively large numbers has taken place only within the past decade. The factors involved in this in-migration are numerous and complex as will become apparent. On the one hand, they are related to the problems of making a living according to the level of new expectations in many rural areas. On the other hand, they include the attractions and amenities of life in the pasar, or trading center, of education, wage-earning and escape from the farm.

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177 In keeping with the bifocal perspective of this study, the approach taken is a regional one, i.e., one in which the development of Sibu is seen in the context of the area from where its resources have come, and in the interplay between inhabitants of the urban center and rural hinterland. The rationale for this approach is that the emergence and development of Sibu can be understood only within the setting of the area from where products extracted from forest, farm and garden have supported the life of the urban residents. The townspeople, in turn, have supplied not only the goods needed and wanted by rural residents but also have interacted with them in an exchange of values and norms which have been influential in the structural and cultural changes that have occurred among rural residents.

121 While the attempt to take the regional approach may appear presumptuous, deviating from more traditional anthropological approaches,

132 133 The combination of the erratic picture of rainfall, a great amount of water, flat land and high tides, makes prediction of water levels hazardous in the extreme, and when heavy rains coincide with [243] high tides, flooding is likely to occur. This element of uncertainty is of great importance to both hill - and wet-rice farmers.

132 133 243 For the past three years, i.e., the agricultural years of July to March, 1969 to 1971, forty per cent of the Ibans surveyed in the Sibu District claimed to have been caught out by early rains or to have lost their crops to flooding. Some anticipated a short but sufficient dry season in late June or July and cleared accordingly, only to have rains come after their land was cleared and the brief dry season earlier. In 1971, there were two short dry spells and some who were not ready to burn in the first one at the end of May were able to take advantage of the latter one in August.[3] Farmers in low-lying areas

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[821] [3]Formerly, Iban horticultural activities in all areas were carried out according to the positions of three principal constellations: the Pleiades (bintang banyak), Orion (bintang tiga), and Sirius (bintang Tangkong peredah). These stars are still followed in the schedules of some Ibans, especially in remoter areas, where it is said, "If there were no stars we Iban would be lost, not knowing when to plant; we live [821] by the stars" (Freeman 1955-40). Stellar lore is rapidly disappearing [178] in this District and temporal orientation is increasingly based on the calendar; for example, the ritual beginning of horticulture is fixed on June 1st when the Gawai Dayak is observed. This, also, has obvious problems, because of unseasonable rains.

136 Kerotau opposite Sibu (Hose 1927-90), and the presence of macaques, gibbons, lorises, the proboscis monkey, and crocodiles in the District.[5] These animals are rarely encountered for they have been captured or killed by men who have entered the area, or they have fled into the upriver areas as the forest have been cut. Occasionally, honey-bears, wild pigs and deer are found and the last two damage rice crops, but in comparison to more protective forest areas farther upriver, the animal population in the Sibu District is relatively small and of minimal importance in the food quest of Ibans and others.

Smythies (1960) lists and describes more than 200 birds found on the island of Borneo. Of these, about two dozen are of economic or [223] ritual importance to the Ibans in this District.[6] In the former category are water-birds, pheasants, swifts, sparrows, hornbills and mynahs, the first three being trapped for food, sparrows being a serious pest to [781] rice crops, and the last two being caught to sell. Birds in the latter [178] group comprise the seven omen birds (Freeman 1960 ) and are important

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[5] For more complete listing of animals see Banks 1949 or Low 1968.

[6] These include the following of economic importance: burong engkeruak, ruai, simpidan, chinegil, sengayan, pipit, entelit, kenyalang and tiong; of ritual significance: Ketupong, bubut, kuchai, tandok ulat, nendak, embuas, beragai, papau, bejampong, and pangkas. For English and scientific names see Smythies.

136 in Iban augury, though there are few tuai burong (augurs) found in this
[787] District and bird-reading is rapidly disappearing.
[178]

Many of the streams and rivers contain relatively plentiful
136 supplies of fish, shrimp and snails which constitute the principal
226 source of meat and protein for the Ibans. The presence of several species is dependent upon the conditions of the water, whether high or low, and the techniques for catching the fish are adapted accordingly.

136 According to information supplied by the Sarawak Museum, there are only three species of poisonous snakes among the numerous reptiles
[237] in Sarawak. These are the cobra, krait and adder. Several sub-species of python are found, the most common being the ular sawa (Python) and ular ripong (Python curtus), both of which are highly prized for their meat and the former for its skin which is preserved and sold to shop-
[825] keepers or tourists. Occasionally, bayak (monitor lizards, family Varanidae) are captured by Ibans and Chinese, and either eaten or sold being valued as a source of strength.

B. Economic Bases of Sibu

177 Sibu has been built out of the forests of the Third Division.
439 The town has developed as an entrepot where imported goods have been exchanged for local forest products, the most important of which are jungle produce, rubber, pepper and timber. It is possible to distinguish three periods in the history of Sibu in each of which revenue

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu



Since the termination of headhunting and the opening of military employment to Ibans as trackers with forces in Malaya, the Sarawak Rangers, or the Field Force, thousands of young Iban men have found it possible to fulfill their cultural expectations through participation in the military.

Another aspect of the migrations that was related to the raiding and headhunting activities of the Ibans was that some moved to escape the predatory activities of their own kind. For example, Ibans moved from the Lemanak because they were caught in the placer-like movements of the Saribas and Skrang Ibans. One informant, commenting on the reason his people moved to Bawang Assan via Stras, Binatang, said,[16]

> "We were weary of being raided every year or two. We would harvest our rice and acquire a few things, only to be hit in a raid, and lose everything, if not our lives. So, we figured it was easier to move."

It is apparent from the above that not all Ibans participated in raiding and headhunting. These feats of bravery were carried out by bands of young braves (to use Sandin's word) at the expense of fellow Ibans or people of other groups.

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[16] Text: Kami nyau puas diserang tiap taun tauka dua tuan. Udah kami ngetau lalu bulih utai mimit, tak diserang, nyau semoa sebuti' nyawa kami enda. Nya alai, ko ati kami, nyamai agi pindah. (Anyau Bakit, interview, 15 September, 1969).

Iban, making the acquisition of followers and accumulation of political capital most difficult for the leader. Yet, at the same time, the Iban is willing, even desirous, of giving his support to any leader from whom he anticipates rewards.[21] Aware of this, the raja berani built followings through promises of adventure, plunder (perapasan) and heads (antu pala'). Because of the fragile nature of ties between leaders and followers, the former constantly sought to re-inforce their holds on their anerbiak ("followers"). As Sahlins wrote of the "big man," so, too, the raja berani formerly (and his modern politician counterpart)

> "combines with an ostensible interest in the general welfare a more profound measure of self-interested cunning and economic calculation. His gaze. . . is fixed unswervingly to the main chance.[22] His every public action is designed to make a competitive and invidious comparison with others, to show a standing above the masses that is produce of his own manufacturing."

The competition to build and maintain a following exerted considerable pressure both on the raja berani as it does on the modern Iban

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[21] Traditional leader-follower relations were built on exchange of loyalty for booty and heads. Present ones are based on kantau, gifts not infrequently of money.

[22] An ambitious young Iban, forced to choose between running for Council Negri and accepting the scholarship offered him to the United States, chose the latter, calculating the long-range gains to be greater. (1963-291).

177 confuse in their pronunciation the words tuan ("master, lord") and Tuhan ("God").[67]

2. Settlement Patterns

000 The Sibu District is marked by an absence of ethnic wards. While the Malay population tends to be clustered along what formerly was Sungai Sibu and presently is Kampong Nyabor Road and extends down the bank of the Igan to Kampong Hilir, there are no regulations compelling them to live in that area and they are as free as their funds permit and hearts desire to move elsewhere. In fact, a number of Malay families live outside the kampong, some who are employed by Government or companies in [177] [369] furnished quarters. Within the kampong are to be found non-Malays: Ibans, Chinese, and even an occasional orang putih.

The Chinese population has been located predominantly within one or two miles of the banks of the main rivers, the Rajang, Igan and Laba'an. Notable exceptions are those shopkeepers who moved into areas near longhouse communities, with whom they traded. The opening of the Oya Road and its branches has permitted a number of Chinese to move to land adjacent the roadways, some being purchased individually and other occupied under Government Scheme, as at Sibintek.

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[829] [67] On one occasion while travelling with the late Pengulu Ciman, he introduced the writer as petara ("god"), going on to explain that how else could you refer to people who had done so much technologically and [178] were so wealthy (sic). Members of the younger generation are not so free in acts of deification.

631 There also was a central room where cases could be heard, one of the requirements being that a kunsil had to be present to witness and record the details of the cases.

178 631 484 A development of significance in the increasing pasar-ward orientation of Ibans in this District has been the virtual cessation of the pengulus' visiting longhouses in their areas in the past decade. As a result of the cessation of raun pengulu, Ibans having cases to be adjudicated must come to Sibu, for, with the exception of Pengulu Gelau of the Lower Igan, all of the pengulu spend a considerable amount of their time in Sibu.[12] Two of them, Pengulu Poh (Pasai) and Pengulu Pengabang (Assan), have residences in Sibu. Two others, Pengarah Chundi (Aup) and Pengulu Chat (Bawang Assan), come into Sibu once a week or more often. Pengulu Meringgai (Durin), who lives farther away, comes in for stays of a week or longer, and the seventh, Pengulu Pilang, has left the area of his jurisdiction, Menyan, and has farmed for the past three years on Pulau Keretau.

3. District Office

657 Another of the many administrative branches of Government located in Sibu that is of considerable importance in the life of the Ibans is

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[12] Much time is spent in the Raban Hotel where business deals are transacted or where cases are heard as necessary.

671 Participants in the sum began by listing all controversial
657 customs and penalties, and debate was held on each aspect of adat
175 about which there was disagreement. After some consonance had been reached on each item, the pengulu and tuai returned to consult with their anembiak, and after a final discussion, the Iban adat for the Third Division was drafted:

> "Pengulu Dalam (Ujang) opened the proceedings with a speech announcing that uniformity had been achieved, and the Resident then read out the clauses in detail, setting forth the agreed penalty for each offence. No voice of dissent was heard."[16]

Subsequent meetings were held, for example in 1936 and 1952, for the amending of the codified adat, with the publication of Tusun
671 Tunggu[17] as the product of the sum. Although both the Rajah's and the
178 Colonial Government attempted to codify Iban adat to bring it into line with the rulers' expectations, experience since the publication of Tusun Tunggu indicates that it is impossible to comprehend adat in a neatly arranged code.[18] As one astute student of customary law in

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[538 829] [16] Undoubtedly true, but the Iban expression, sum juak, deriving from a folk-story about the ikan juak (a river fish) who was false to an agreement he made not to bite the legs of birds who alighted in the river, reveals a common understanding among Ibans that you cannot take silent consent or even acknowledged agreement to preclude dissent outside of an sum.

[17] A list of fines.

[764] [18] I have seen a tuai rumah and his anembiak hassle for two hours about the propitiation to be paid the antu before a corpse of someone who died outside the house could be brought in. On another occasion, a pengulu, tuai rumah and tuai bilik spent an evening discussing payments to be made when bringing a corpse across another family's ruai.

671 Sarawak has noted,
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> ". . .The adat of Sarawak is neither simple nor straight forward and is not to be traced to any one source. . . Adat has remained adat in its pure form, a rule of tradition to be found only in the mind of society."

657 [671] The codification of Iban adat was consonant with the policy of indirect rule which was followed into the colonial era. For it permitted the Governments, Brooke and British, to select and support those features of adat that were congenial with their purposes and make them normative through implementation by Government-endorsed leaders.[19]

6. Legitimization of Land Holdings

423 [177] An important aspect of Iban adat which underwent radical change was that dealing with land tenure. As we have noted, traditionally, a pioneer and his descendants claimed usufruct rights to land cleared for cultivation. Just as individuals claimed rights over land they had cleared and farmed (temuda'), so, also, longhouse communities claimed customary rights over sites of longhouses built and deserted (tembawai). 657 423 Brooke restraint of Iban migrations and encouragement of Chinese group immigration created a situation which resulted in the enactment of many land laws, which, though by intent were designed to protect the indigenes from the Chinese, resulted in a new context to which traditional adat had to be adjusted, and a demographic pattern unlike any other area of Sarawak.

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[19] This also permitted the rationalization of Government's paternalistic interference.

enteritis (chirit) are common. According to several local doctors, gastroenterities is the main cause of deaths among infants, especially of Ibans and others in remote areas, from where they are brought in for treatment in such a dehydrated state that they are beyond help.

Other intestinal disorders such as diarrhea (chirit) and dysentery (bira' ka darah) are common. Worms (lundong) and other parasites contribute to a number of disorders, including distention of the abdomen, anemia, and a generally weakened condition in the hosts, and the incidence of parasitic infection in the indigenous population is virtually universal.

Tetanus (tegamggam) continues to be a major cause of death in many more remote Iban communities, resulting from a ritual cutting of the umbilical cord with an unsterilized bamboo silver and then smearing the end of the cord with ashes.

Leprosy (sakit lan) was the other major disease that was greatly feared by the local population, bearers being ostracized. Those who contract leprosy are sent to Kuching where a modern, well-equipped leprasarium has been constructed.

Because of these and a score of other diseases, as well as various forms of mental illness, attention has been given to treatment and prevention as funds and personnel have been available. In 1902, a clinic and dispensary was built near Fort Brooke with a dresser in charge. This was expanded into a small hospital but the response of Chinese and

indigenes was slight, each group preferring traditional medical practices. Thus, for example, a total of 1,744 patients were treated in the Sibu Hospital.

In 1931, on the eve of his return to China, a prominent Chinese from Engkilo, Lau King Howe, contributed one-half of the cost of a new hospital which still bears his name. The hospital has been expanded and now contains ten wards. Exposure to the work of doctors and nurses in the hospital has evoked an ever-increasing response from all groups. During the last year for which figures are available, a total of 106,520 patients were treated in the Hospital as indicated in Table 12.

TABLE 12

Number of Patients Treated
Lau King Howe Hospital
1970

| Ethnic Group | Number | New Cases | Follow-ups | Admissions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chinese | 40,243 | 46,050 | 54,404 | 6,066 |
| Iban | 34,237 | | | |
| Malay | 32,040 | | | |
| Total | 106,520 | Total of All Cases | | 106,520 |

In addition to the Government Hospital, eight private doctors practice in the pasar. Although these doctors in contrast to the socialized medicine of the hospital, charge for their services and medicines dispensed, they are frequented by hundreds of patients daily. The

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 187]

464 this chapter the pattern which was established by the second decade of this century of unemployed persons coming into the pasar to seek work. The number of Ibans who came in during the first half-century was re- [198] latively small because there were few opportunities open to them. With the development of Sibu during the past twenty-five years, however, and the proliferation of schools near longhouse communities, more and more Ibans are seeking employment in or through the pasar.

According to the 1960 Census, 96 per cent of all economically 198 243 active Iban males and 99 per cent of all economically active females 463 were engaged in rice cultivation. Table 14 presents the other categories in which Ibans were working at that time. Regrettably, data are not yet available from the 1970 Census to indicate shifts in employment categories, but upon the basis of a survey conducted in connection with this study and upon the author's impression, it is most likely that the number and percentage of persons employed in non-agricultural categories has increased significantly.

The Iban population of Sibu fluctuates considerably as members of 162 464 the society move in and out of the pasar. This makes the task of ascer- 369 taining the number of Ibans who may be termed permanent residents of the urban area difficult if not impossible, by admission of an official of the Department of Statistics, Kuala Lumpur, and of the Urban District Council. However, the importance of Sibu as a recruitment center has

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 196 ]

A. Rice Horticulture

The Ibans who moved into the Sibu District during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were shifting cultivators. The main characteristics of shifting cultivation are,

> "rotation of fields rather than crops; clearing by means of fire; absence of draft animals and of manuring; use of human labour only; employment of the dibble stick. . . ; short periods of soil occupancy alternating with long fallow periods."

As already discussed in Chapter Two, the movements of the Ibans into the area were due to a number of factors, one being the growth of the population in the Second Division, another the Iban value of new land and the status accorded the pioneer, a cultural reinforcement of an adaptive mechanism.

The horticulture of the Ibans did not involve rotation of fields so much as the gradual extension of their farms down the Sarikei and Kanowit, and their tributaries, and on across the Rejang and up the northern branches of tributaries of the Rejang and Igan. As one Tuai Rumah related,

> "We moved from Julau to Nanga Salim, thence we farmed both sides of the river, moving to uncleared and unclaimed areas and finally came to Ulu Salim."

The settlements of the Ibans who moved into the District were by no means as permanent as they are today. Rather, temporary houses were constructed in proximity to land selected for farming, and abandoned when the Ibans moved to new sites. As two women recounted the story of

361 the settlement of Bawang Assan, they described the frequency of the movements that took place prior to the final settlements.

> "We moved first to Bukit Lan, but the Rajah wouldn't let us grow rubber,[1] so we had to break up our longhouse and move to Bukit Pantu where we lived in individual dwellings (langkau). From there we moved across the Leba'an to Sungai Jabai, then to Sungai Bilat, back to Tembawai Nyiur,[2] to Tembawai Pungkang[3] and finally to Nanga Bawang Assan. Only then did we build a permanent longhouse. That's the reason why we have many temuda'" ("previous farming sites").

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178 Unlike the Ibans of the Sut and other new areas, who cultivate hill rice as described by Freeman (1955), those in the Sibu District mainly farm wet or swamp rice (padi paya'). The juxtaposition of several factors combined in the shift of the Ibans from the cultivation of hill to wet rice. The first and most obvious is the different lie of the land in the Rejang delta, where the relatively recent deposits of alluvial soils are flat, giving way only occasionally to hills and these generally at a [77] distance of several miles from the river banks. A second factor was the introduction of rubber and the Ibans' development of rubber gardens.

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[657] [829] [1]The Second Rajah's assignment of land for twelve miles below Sibu on either side of the Rejang has been rationalized in several different ways by the Ibans who were forced to move, this being one.

[103] [2]So named because of three coconut trees that still grow there.

[823] [3]The Ibans considered this site "hot" (angat) and unlucky because of an unusual number of illnesses and deaths, for which they had to abandon their houses (pungkang, "empty").

243 As already described, the investment of energy, time and other resources 178 [177] into the gardens required a degree of sedentariness. A third factor as we have seen was the coming of the Chinese whose settlements and land grants precluded the continuous and free expansion of the Ibans into [654] ever new lands. A fourth factor which has become important only within the last decade has been the rice schemes ("Assistance to Wet-Padi Planters"), in which aid in the form of seed, fertilizers, insecticides and advice have been given by the Agriculture Department to participants in the skim perintah ("Government schemes"). A fifth factor about which more will be said later is the greater yields to be appreciated [433] from wet rice. The Assistant Agricultural Officer for the Department in the Third Division estimates the yield per acre of hill rice to be four piculs, whereas the yield per acre of wet rice is on an average six to eight piculs, with schemes yielding as much as 16 piculs per acre.[4]

1. Rice is Life

243 771 Iban rice cultivation has been highly elaborated into a complex system of beliefs and practices. For, as Freeman has written,

> "To the Iban, the growing of padi is a ritual undertaking, and their whole system of agriculture is based on an elaborate fertility cult. . . The vast majority of the Iban people are still 'pagan', but they are, nonetheless, an extremely religious people, and ritual pervades every aspect of their lives."

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[4] Letter from Assistant Agricultural Officer, 4 May, 1971.

243 On the final day of harvest, a small section of the field is
788 reserved for cutting the next morning. On that last morning the family workers early take an offering to the final stand of rice, and after a prayer to the rice soul to go with them, the last panicles are cut and carefully covered with a piece of cloth. This ritual, Ngelechut ka Padi, is performed to insure that the semengat padi will return to the longhouse with the rice, and not be left in the ground.

243 The newly harvested rice is stored temporarily in the langkau or,
178 if the house is close by, carried immediately to the longhouse. Although
285 the traditional carrying basket (lanji') is still used for transporting the rice, it rapidly is giving way to gunny-sacks (guni) which have the advantages of being cheap (M$.40 each), taking no time to make as the baskets do, and being useful for storing rice in excess to space available in the bark-bins (tibang).

243 After the padi has been received ceremonially into the house,
574 preparations are made for threshing (tungku', v.f., nungku'). On the day that the threshing begins, the family serves rice cakes, drinks and whatever other food they may be able to furnish. All members of the community are invited (dipadah ka) and a festive air fills the house.

243 The padi is emptied from the lanji' or guni into a heap on the
285 ruai, from which about a bushel at a time is taken and placed onto a tikai senggang, a mat made of large fibers and proscribed for any activity

243 other than that of threshing the padi. When I asked on several occasions
285 whether the tikai senggang could be used for any other purpose, the Ibans replied emphatically that it could not, for it would offend the samengat padi.

> ". . . Grasping a loose bark-cloth strap in each hand to gain support and purchase, (the thresher) commences to tread the panicles (tangkai). The action is a vigorous one, the outer panciles being forced down on to the mat and kneaded with the bare soles of the feet. They are gathered up again with the instep and inner surface of the foot and ankle, to be trampled once more. In this way the grain (still in the hull, of course) is gradually separated from the branches of the panicles. The first treading of a bushel of panicles takes about seven to nine minutes - the time varying with the degree of ripeness at reaping."

462 476 Threshing is usually done by men, although in the absence of male workers women do it. If labor-exchange has been arranged for other activities, such as planting and weeding, it is usual for the group to continue through together and to share in threshing.

After the first threshing, in which many grains are loosened, women squatting to the sides of the tikai senggang lift the panicles (now called ruman) and sift any free grains through their fingers onto the mat. The panicles then are gathered up again for a second threshing by foot.

243 177 178 Although the Ibans are aware of and acknowledge the quicker methods of the Chinese who harvest padi with a long-knife, grasping a dozen or more stalks at once and cutting them off about 15 inches from

243 the panicles, then flailing the heads over the boards of a specially
177 constructed container, they say that they dare not follow these techni-
178 ques which they consider coarse (kasar) for fear that they would offend
the semengat padi.

243 As the padi is threshed, it is spread on a bidai, a large mat
251 used especailly for drying (kerekai) the padi on the family's tanju'.
285 The padi is poured onto the bidai and raked with a wooden-bladed rake to
a depth of about one inch. Lengths of bamboo or thin saplings up to
twelve feet long are extended from the windows opening onto the tanju'
so that hungary chickens can be driven away by a swing of the bamboo
or wood. Ideally, the padi will be dried for a full day to assure that
it will not turn moldy (bekuap) in storage. The first drops of a shower
send men and women alike scurrying to cover the padi or to bring it into
the house in case of a hard rain.

243 After the padi is dried, it is returned to the ruai and covered
by folding the corners of the bidai over it. On a hot and windless day,
the padi is winnowed. The bidai is opened and the padi transferred to a
series of baka', circular baskets made of plaited rattan averaging about
one bushel in capacity. The baka' full of padi are taken one by one to
the tanju' where the winnowing is done. The bearer tilts the baka'
slightly allowing a steady stream of padi to pour over the lip into the
[462] tikai senggang which have been spread to receive the padi. As one
person pours (berayar) the padi, one to three women fan (muput) winnowing-

592 Malaysia in Limbang, and has moved there with financial assistance from
591 Ganai and Sana. Thus, while Asun and Gaon still are recognized as members of Ganai's bilik, as technically are Sana and Sindong by the former's agreement with Ganai, in fact only Ganai and Nunsong are living in Bilik No. 5. Thus, within the past ten years, the composition of Ganai's bilik has changed from three - to two - generations, reckoning Asun and Gaon as members.

In the genealogical composition for Rumah Imba, Nyelang and Gaong, as in the larger sample, a majority of the families are comprised of nuclear or stem families.[5] Although no instances of married siblings with adult children living together as members of the same bilik-family were encountered in the sample, two cases were found, one in Majau, the other in Rumah Councillor Ranggar, Rantau Dilang. But these two situations were so rare and atypical to raise the comment,

> "(That is a )very unusual family. Most of us simply couldn't get along well enough to live as they do." (Nyelai' amat sida' nya'. Kami mayoh enda' ulih begulai baka sida' ia, Bangau Acping, 17.3.71).

592 A significant development in recent years has been the tendency
591 away from one of the cardinal rules of social organization, viz. the
178 presence of at least one child in the natal bilik to look after the parents
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[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 256]

[5] Rumah Imba, Nyelang, and Gaong were not included in Table 18 because no data were available for the years 1960 and 1966.

592 in their old age. As Freeman describes this principle,
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> ". . .at least one of the children of a family, when he or she reaches maturity and marries, always remains in the parents bilik. All the other children may marry out and so become members of other units, but one always stays in the natal bilik."

While this rule remains culturally normative, in fact a number of instances may be adduced to indicate that it is not followed; for example, the family situations of Mayah and Ganai of Rumah Nyala. In both cases, the husbands agreed to uxorilocal residence (nguai ka indu')[6] but because the husbands of both were wage-earners, the rule of residence was waived in favor of the promise of financial help and the assumption of responsibility. The marriage of Vornica, Mayah's daughter, was so brief that this promise could not be realized. In the case of Sana and Sindong, Ganai supplies them with rice when he comes to town, and he lives with them in the Police Barracks while in town. When Asun moved to Limbang to take up his work, Ganai gave him his pocket money and Sana bought his brother-in-law's air ticket when the latter flew to Limbang to take up work.

592 The orientation to a cash economy has affected this residence rule,
591 so that monthly remittance by wage-earning children or their spouses is
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183 as acceptable as physical presence and labor that may be contributed to
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[6] Nguai or ngugi means to take residence with wife's or husband's parents. Nguai ka indu' is uxorilocal, Nguai ka lelaki, virilocal residence.

592 the acquisition of food and marketable goods. At a general meeting of
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178 the tuai rumah and tuai bilik shortly before Asun's departure for Limbang,
183 each man, beginning with the tuai rumah, spoke as eloquently as possible,
434 trying to impress upon Asun how much Ganai had spent on his support, food, education and clothing.

> "Now, you are going to earn wages, so don't forget your parents who have supported you all your life" (Diatu' nuan deka' makai gaji. Anang enda' ingat ka gids apai indai ke udah melanja ka nuan.

Even if the move of children to Sibu or elsewhere for employment, leaves no one in the bilik to look after the parents, this often is preferable, even sought, if the children contribute financially towards the
[181] support of the parents. For the Iban is cash-conscious and cash-hungary, money always being inadequate to meet their demands and desires. With only 36 per cent of the Iban population self-sufficient in rice, a majority of the families must buy this staple for a period from a few weeks to half-a-year. The uncertain prices of rubber, pepper, ginger and other products makes wage-earning an attractive situation, both for the earner and his parents or in-laws whom he may be called on to help. Hence, the changing pattern in this cardinal rule of Iban postmarital residence.

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592 The composition of the bilik-family fluctuates between the nuclear
178 family and the stem family in a majority of cases. There are a number of reasons for this fluctuation, some of which are directly related to the
[161] in-migration of Ibans to Sibu. First, the fluctuation is related with an increase in population and a concept of limited goods. In Rumah Nyala,

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592 the population increased from 113 in 1960 to 130 in 1966 and 246 in 1970.
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161 During the same years the number of bilik increased from 19 to 26 to 33. This increase was due in part to the marriage in of a number of persons, in part to the number of births exceeding deaths, and in part, to newcomers to the community. During this period, 55 members of the longhouse took up employment elsewhere, either on a commuting basis or for periods up to two years when they are absent from the community. Although these persons are officially recognized as members of Rumah Nyala, if they and their dependents are deducted from the population figure, the remainder in actual daily residence at Rumah Nyala is 165.

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592 We have noted in the cases of Mayah and Ganai that the composition
178 of their families varied with the movements in and out of their children
464 and siblings and that this was correlated in part with their children's employment. When Noel quit his job, he returned to Mayah's bilik. When he found new employment, he and his family moved to Sibu. In discussing the reasons for his moving out, Noel said that although his family usually has enough rice, yet their land can support only so many people. In addition, his employment opens a new source for exploitation, to supplement padi-farming. Further, he said that as their bilik is not wealthy, and Vernica is a girl, it is better that she stays to take care of Mayah and to inherit the bilik.

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A second principal reason for fluctuation in the composition of the bilik-family is related to bilik partition.[7] Partition occurs when an individual or family removes from the natal bilik to found a new, separate bilik. That this is common may be ascertained by reference to Table 18, A, in which nine of the 15 longhouses surveyed showed an increase in the number of bilik-families, the principal cause being partition. Partition arises primarily from the development of collateral nuclear families with divergent and incompatible interests. Within the bilik, property is divided into common and private. In the more traditional longhouse, common property included temuda' (farm lands cleared by ancestors), fruit trees, rubber and pepper gardens, brassware, large Chinese jars, antique bowls and plates, ceremonial garments and ornaments, pua' kumbu' (woven blankets) and other woven materials, augury sticks, charms and medicines, sacred and ordinary rice seed, and human skulls (antu pala'). In more modern houses, such as Rumah Nyala, Imba and Nyelang, common property also includes wrought iron furniture with vinyl-covered, foam rubber cushions, glass-front cupboards, desks, vanity tables, and dining room suites. At Rumah Nyala, it even includes a share in the combo instruments, purchased at a cost of $1700 by the entire longhouse community, and the electrical wiring and fluorescent tubes, as well as the dynamo (Iban dilemo) for powering the electric supply.

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[7] See Freeman's excellent discussion on "Partition," 1970:41-55.

A [See p. 264--Analyst]

597 887 their children. Although the elderly remain active and, as the Iban say, don't want to be empty-handed and idle (enggai puang jari), nevertheless, there comes a time when they no longer can farm and earn an adequate living for themselves, and when they become dependent upon their children. If they are childless, however, they must adopt the child of another person to assure that they have some one to take care [769] of them in their old age. At the same time, the adopted child becomes heir in the bilik, provides for the bilik's continuity over time, and will perform the rituals so important culturally for a pleasant life for the parents in Sebayan (the next life).

597 571 602 A third reason why adoption is practiced is to strengthen ties of friendship and kinship. Children are highly prized, and the gift of a child in adoption to a kinsman or friend is the paramount expression of brotherhood.

608 Finally, adoption occurs between adult peers in the case of kampar (strangers, sojourners) who are adopted as brothers (be-ambu' 608 nadi'). When the decision was made to adopt a kampar, traditionally, 796 178 the intention of the sponsor was made known to other members of the longhouse, and ritually confirmed before the members of the community in a ceremony in which the participants blend their blood together (bekempit ka dagah). This ritual is rarely practiced, and the adoption of the kampar is done much more casually and privately by the family which takes him in.

597 infants of disease that formerly would have proved fatal, such as gastro-
177 enteritis, diphtheria, as well as other alimentary and respiratory ill-
846 nesses. Figures on the relative incidence of infant mortality rates are
[165] unavailable, but it may be noted that in the three houses surveyed the number of childless couples totalled only seven.

597 A second answer to the question is that there is less dependence
178 felt by parents on their children. That is, as the orientation to a
593 cash economy and achievement of regular income through employment takes place, there is less need felt for placing the parents' security in their old age on a child who may or may not be faithful to his adopted parents. The Employees Provident Fund or a private savings account is more dependable.

597 Although these rationalizations of the situation do not wholly
829 suffice as explanations, and adoptions still occur in childless families
178 as well as those with children, for the love and enjoyment children may
[369] offer, yet they are significant as perceptions of Ibans as to what appears as a change in the practice of adoption, viz., the incidence of adoption decreases closer to the urban center. More data are required, however, to substantiate or refute this hypothesis.

597 Adoption provides a second way to membership in the bilik-family. Adoption establishes the full rights of the new member to share in the property, to farm the land, to collect the fruit, and to all other privileges of the family.

Genealogists (tukang tusut) were highly respected and important individuals in Iban society, and were called upon to trace out relationships between every couple at the time of their marriage. Few of the genealogists remain in this District, their role having given way to such institutions as schools and the Land and Survey Department.

C. Ceremonial Relationships and Fictional Kin-Ties

Encompassing the bilateral kindred and extending well beyond it is a set of ties built upon ceremonial relationships. These ties between both kinsmen and non-kinsmen allow for exploitation by all participants as they have need. The relationships are contractual arrangements which operate upon a strict principle of reciprocity between the individuals and groups involved.

The Iban gawai (ceremonies) cover all the major (and minor) events of moment to the Iban. It is possible to enumerate more than 60 such gawai, ranging from Sandau Mari, observed because of someone's dream, to Gawai Antu, held to commemorate the dead. The gawai require accumulation of vast amounts of food and drink, often much more than any single longhouse community can raise alone.

After a community has decided to hold a gawai, members of the host community visit those houses in which they have kinsmen and friends, and with whom they have entered into a ceremonial relationship. They inform their relatives and friends that the gawai will be held, and then ask for eggs (for sucking), chickens and pigs, and other foodstuffs. The relatives

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu



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"Formerly, divorce was much more common among us. I, myself, have had a number of wives. But then, we realised that we can never get ahead this way. Marry one year, divide our goods the next, and so on. So, it's better to stay together."

Summary

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Iban society is strongly oriented to kin-ties in both rural and urban areas. The Iban kin-relations tend to be flexible and non-exclusive, so that groupings may be formed as needed or not. Kinship terms and behavior patterns show a general consistency between the principals of both cognatic and affinal kinsmen.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu

## SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

### A. The Longhouse Community

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178 A majority of the Ibans of the Sibu District live in relatively permanent settlements, the most characteristic feature being the longhouse. As previously noted, several factors have influenced the transition from shifting cultivation to permanent settlement, among them the planting and development of rubber gardens, the shift from hill padi to wet padi and the possibilities of continuous cultivation of farm land or cultivation with shorter periods of fallow through fertilization, and restrictions on migration owing to population pressures.

361 Of 37 longhouses surveyed, the oldest is Rumah Salleh of Bawang Assan, which was built in 1920.[1] Two houses included in the sample were begun in 1970: Rumah Bandang of Pasai and Rumah Luat of Durin. Several other houses have been begun recently, and the average age of the houses in the sample is 13.5 years (see Table 32).[A]

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[622] [377] [1] Rumah Salleh was founded in 1920 but as with all longhouses, has been added onto at different times. In 1961, the ruai of Tuai Rumah Salleh was rebuilt of hardwood planks which later were shellaced, and his bilik was wired for lights and a refrigerator.

[A] [The author apparently means Table 31 on the following page--Analyst]

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban 006
Sibu



The introduction of the Padi Planting
361 Scheme by the Agriculture Department has permitted approximately sixty per
241 cent of the Ibans to farm near their longhouses. In several cases where
[654] the farms were deemed too far away, the families concerned moved closer to their farms and built a new longhouse as, for instance, in the case of Rumah Nyelang of Ulu Salim.

369 The longhouse communities of the District are related to the pasar in a variety of ways, as already discussed. These relations are expressed in the increasing frequency of travel between longhouses and the pasar, [178] and the demand of Ibans for ways and means of travel. Whereas prior to the mid-1960's travel was either by water or by bicycle-paths, the construction of the Oya-Durin Road system through the District has effected changes in the means of travel and in the orientation of rural residents. Bus service is available to the Oya and Durin Roads and for those who are willing and able to pay, taxis-licensed and private[2] -travel wherever and whenever they are paid. High-powered motor launches, sometimes misnamed "expresses," ply between Sibu and rural areas, navigating the Rejang, Igan and Leba'an Rivers.

361 Extension of the road system and the urban connections offered
178 thereby has produced several interesting examples of value change and resettlement by Ibans. When surveyors began laying out the lines for the new road through Ulu Naman, the people of Rumah Buda forcibly blocked the

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[2] Read, "pirate."

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) - 1973 - OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu



construction of the road near their house for fear that it would make their longhouse angat ("hot, unhealthy") because new. Reluctantly, the engineers rerouted the road at a distance of one hour's walk from the house. After the road had been completed, the members of Rumah Buda realized the benefits offered by the road: regular transportation to Sibu, greater availability of Government services and goods, and opportunities for more contact with friends and relatives. Consequently, they have abandoned the old longhouse and are building small, individual house along the roadside.[3]

A final factor in the permanence of longhouse settlements is related to the amount of money, time and labor invested in the house's construction. Historically, Iban longhouses were not as sturdily constructed as the houses of other indigenous groups, such as the Kayans. The Iban longhouses were constructed of ironwood posts but flooring, walls and roofing was of less durable materials. The reason offered by the Iban, Anyau Bakit, was that the Iban never expected to occupy the house for more than five or six years before moving on to fell and farm other virgin

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[3]The forcible blocking of the original route was related in a lament by Pengulu Meringgai who reckoned that he lost about M$50,000 due to the rerouting. According to the old plan, the road would have gone through fifty acres of his land, the price of which would have risen to M$1,000 per acre. As it turned out, he, too, had to move in order to live closer to the road.

18:Sutlive . E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OCo Iban OC6
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361 land.[4] We have noted already the significance the Ibans attached to the
342 construction of the first house made of durable planks (rumah papan) at
[829] Bawang Assan.

Where longhouses are old or built of impermanent materials, they may be abandoned or dismantled. When this occurs, the occupants will move either to a new site if a more favorable one is available, or else build temporary houses (dapor, kitchen) immediately behind the old site on which the new house will be built. In three cases out of ten in which longhouses were abandoned or dismantled, the residents rebuilt on the same site. In the other seven cases, the residents moved to new sites but in no instance more than three miles distance from the former house site. In four of the ten cases, the Ibans did not construct a new longhouse but rather a cluster of individual houses, about which more will be said later.

361 It must be noted that while the longhouse system may be described
241 as one of relatively permanent residence, the Ibans in some instances return only occasionally to the longhouse. For example, the occupants of Rumah Meruan live in langkau immediately adjacent their rubber gardens, returning to the longhouse only for ceremonial or judicial occasions.

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[178] [4] Dulu' suba' ambis lama' kuat diau lima tauka enam taun, pindah ngiga' menoa baru. Tang, diatu' enda' ulih, orang enggai agi' ("Formerly, the longest people lived in one place would be for five or six years, then move on to look for new country. But, you can't do that now, and the people no longer want to"), Anyau Bakit, interview, 22 March, 1971.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 0C6 Iban 0C6 Sibu



829 621 183

"(According to traditional Iban views) the person who lives alone is Antu Uging-an evil spirit - for he is different, a deviant from other Ibans, else why would he want to live alone. He doesn't share in the life of the longhouse, he doesn't participate in the daily round of activities, and he doesn't accept responsibility for teaching our ways to the younger generation.

621 178

"The Tusun Tunggu Iban ("List of Iban Fines") states specifically that Ibans shall reside in longhouses. But many people no longer pay attention to these laws. For example, the people on Oya Road have no leaders - they have tuai, but these are tuai in name only. Daily they are in the pasar, selling land, acting as representatives for Chinese who want to get native land. And, some of them have built individual dwellings and no longer live in the longhouse."

342 178 One of the tuai rumah referred to in the interview is Tuai Rumah Nyambang, head of a community of sixteen families. Through the sale of some of his land and the acquisition of a timber permit on behalf of a logging company, Nyambang has been able to build a relatively large separate house for his family, at a cost of M$6,700. The house is built of planed boards, elevated ten feet above a smooth concrete floor. The outside is painted a light blue, the floors polished and the ceiling finished with asbestos sheets. The kitchen includes a tiled Chinese-style stove eight feet long and three feet wide, constructed to burn wood. Nyambang is comfortably ensconced with his two wives, who are sisters, and his children in this new house.

829 621 When questioned about the proper place for Ibans to reside, Nyambang, also, insists that the longhouse is the place. Concerning his

T8:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) · 1973 · OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu



829 621 own situation he says:

> "If my anembiak decide to put up a new longhouse, I will build a bilik in it. It's much more pleasant to live in the longhouse rather than alone."

But until then, Nyambang will make do with his present lodgings. [178] It is significant that those who formerly were considered deviant because they put up individual dwellings and lived alone have become the models whom many other desire to emulate.

C. Physical Layout of Settlements

361 342 Although the settlements within this District show considerable variations in the layout of buildings, still the central building in a majority of the communities is the longhouse. A settlement may be comprised of a single longhouse or of several longhouses. Rumah Gaong is a single house, located three miles off the Durin Road and two miles from the next nearest house. Rh. Nyala is built beside Rh. Banta at Sungai Aup. In the Bawang Assan area, there are seven longhouses, two built on the right bank of the Batang Leba'an, five on the banks of the Sungai Bawang Assan, and all within walking distance of one another.

361 342 178 There is at present no longhouse where Nyambang has built his residence, and, given the amount of his investment and the funds becoming available to his anembiak through the forest enterprise that has been opened in their area, enabling them to put up prestigious separate houses, it is doubtful that a new longhouse will be constructed. In fact, some of the anembiak already have constructed houses rivalling that of Nyambang

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu



361 himself.
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Several other instances of the physical fragmentation of longhouses have occurred within the District. At Rumah Nangkai, Batang Pasai, there no longer is a longhouse but an aggregate of individual dwellings built along the rising ground where the former longhouse stood. When Rumah Tindit, Oya Road, broke up in 1962, some of the members joined together to build a new longhouse at a new site. Others, however, such as Entili, chose to build separate houses along the Road in the vicinity of the 15th Mile.

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One man stated that Government has encouraged the dissolution of longhouses for several reasons. Among these are concerns over health and fire, for when illness or fire strike a house, it may sweep through the entire community. But more important in the Government's mind is the delicate problem of land-reform, an unresolved and highly critical issue that contributed to the fall of one Chief Minister and an unwillingness by the Alliance Coalition to deal with it. Under Iban adat, former longhouse sites (tembawai) are held in perpetuity by members and their descendants so long as they continue to constitute a longhouse community. When they dissolve their community, however, all rights to the tembawai are relinquished and the land reverts to the State. The difficulties of keeping track of claims to long-abandonded house-sites are obvious, and a problem Government could solve through the fragmentation of those communities near the roads.

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18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu



311 The pattern of land use varies considerably in each community, depending upon the amount and type of land available. At Rumah Nyala, Sungai Aup, the lower-lying land on the eastern bank of the Aup has been developed into sawah. The higher ground on the western side of the river has been planted with rubber and fruit trees. Closer to the longhouse, coconuts, areca-nuts, and other fruit trees flourish. At Rumah Gaong, Sungai Sengan, farm-lands are not so concentrated and are located at
654 distances up to one-hour's walk from the house. Members of the community have been recipients of Government schemes for pepper and cocoa, and most families have 300 or more pepper plants on hilly, well-drained clay soils. Tuai Rumah Gaong has planted four-dozen cocoa bushes, some of which have borne and the fruit processed for drinking. He also has participated in the Rubber Planting Scheme, obtaining budded rubber from the Agriculture Department to replace his old, low-yielding variety.

423 Land was equally divided among the members of a community, and rights were established through eminent domain. Land rights were guarded by the gerontocratic rule of the elders. When disputes arose, they were adjudicated,

> [422] "by boundary markers such as trees and stumps and according to who came first. Therefore, the tuai rumah also was the tuai menoa (area elder), for he who came first certainly knew the comings and the clearings. Formerly, people depended on genealogies and kin-groups, but now, on lawyers." [178]

Land may be divided into two sub-categories: land held by individuals and their family units, and land the rights to which are shared

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
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342 the ruai is undivided[7] and allows for traffic from the tanju' to the bilik as well as lengthwise, up and down the house. The ruai is separated from the bilik by the dinding udok ("dog's wall"), which is attached to the main supporting posts (tiang bumbong) of the ridge-pole. From the ridge-pole (perabong), the roofs slope down on either side, over the ruai to the front and the bilik to the rear.

The width of the ruai varies from house to house, but remains fairly constant in any single house. For instance, the ruai in the former house of Pengulu Meringgai of Durin was eight feet wide, whereas in his new house [335] it is twenty-five feet wide. The ruai for Rumah Nyala, Rumah Imba and Rumah Nyelang is in each case twenty feet, a standard width being achieved by the professional carpenters who built according to the size of asbestos sheets used for ceiling.[8]

In most ruai, three divisions may be recognized, determined by the tiang (supporting posts). Next to the outer wall is an area referred to generally as the padong, formerly the place of panggau,[9] a sleeping platform raised about one foot above the floor for young unmarried men. The

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[7] On ceremonial occasions, a temporary barrier of saplings (pagar api) may be constructed to indicate that a particular ruai is taboo (mali).

[8] Asbestos ceiling sheets (dik) are four feet square and the houses have five sheets across the ceilings.

[178] [9] Few panggau remain in this District, most having disappeared within the past two decades.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu



342 padong regularly is eight to ten feet wide, and its length is determined by the longitudinal front of the bilik. The padong ruai is one of the most important social centers in the longhouse, for it is the area where most people do light work and, in the case of men, spend their leisure time. When not used, the padong either is uncovered or covered with an old mat, lest good mats be spoiled by dogs defecating on them or their being trampled by playing children. When used, the padong is covered with a tikai, brought from the bilik where they are kept rolled up when not in use.

512 462 During the day time, women split reeds (ngeraut ui) for use in weaving baskets and mats. Men and women separate pepper corns from the stalks, to be taken onto the tanju' for drying. Men split firewood or work on knife-handles or gunwales (gandong) for boats. In the evening, men and women gather to talk about their farms, dreams, or how the latest [574] [276] Apollo flight has upset the weather. As people gather, hosts offer sarang insap (tobacco containers) for a smoke or brass trays containing areca-nuts (pinang), betel leaves (sirih) and lime (kapur), all the fixings for a quid.

342 513 178 Young men sleep on the padong, when not planning and carrying out romantic pursuits of unmarried women. As noted, the panggau[10] no longer

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[114] [10] Freeman's (1970:6) description of "special, bunk-like enclosures, termed agu" as sleeping places for young men is suspect, for agu means "latrine".

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OCo Iban OC6 Sibu



342 is used and the men stretch out on the mats, sometimes using mosquito
513 nets and blankets, sometimes merely covering with the ubiquitous sarong
178 (dandong).

342 Although men often claim that the ruai is the place of males in
562 contradistinction to the bilik where the women belong, this division is not evident except on ceremonial occasions. We already have described women's as well as men's activities that are carried out on the ruai, and more will be described below. However, at festivals, these divisions are more apparent when women guests are led straightway to their hostess' bilik, and men are seated on the ruai. The point of the distinction appears to be not so much an effort to keep women off the ruai as to keep men out of the bilik to provide more occasions for social intercourse with members of other families.[11]

342 A row of posts stand at the inner edge of the padong to support the sadau (loft). These posts mark the boundary of the ruai proper, or the area
[592] used as the walkway by the house. Each family bears the responsibility of
[681] keeping the ruai in good repair and, in case of injury resulting from obvious neglect, may be made to pay a fine in addition to repairing the
[927] ruai. Near the posts, smoked heads (antu pala') are hung by families own-
[374] ing them, and below the heads, an earthen hearth (bedilang) is built for

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[11] The man who spends more time in his bilik than is deemed necessary is likely to be chided as laki indu' ("ladies man").

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 0C6 Iban 0C6 Sibu



342 727 372 periodic ritual smoking in remembrance of the heads.[12]

The ruai is an important area for ritual activities of the Ibans. 342 796 At the beginning of the horticultural year, the pandong (ritual center, with ceremonial blanket enclosing the seed, whetstone, and utensils to be used) is erected on the ruai. The ruai is the path of the bards (lemanbang) to sebayan (the after-world), and it is the way of the gods into the long-house.

Between the ruai proper and the bilik is the tempuan lesong (mortar's 342 412 place), where rice mortars and mills are kept when not in use, hence the 235 name. Firewood is stacked against the dinding udok, and fighting cocks are tethered before the owner's bilik. The tempuan lesong may be demarcated [178] by another row of posts, but in some houses there is no such row. In the modern longhouse of Rumah Nyala, several bilik have long benches attached to the wall and the tempuan lesong has become the sitting area.

3. Sadau

Over each bilik and extending about halfway over the padong ruai [251] is a loft which serves a number of purposes. The most common use of the sadau is as a storage area, where the large bark-bins (tibang) containing the family's rice supply is stored. Mats, baskets, and farm utensils may be stored in the sadau. Some families use the sadau as a sleeping area,

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[114] [12] Freeman is right to stress that "these heads (antu pala') are always the property of one particular family, and are never owned by the long-house group as a whole." (Ibid.).

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban/OC6 Sibu



5. Tiko

342 A recent innovation in three houses, including Rumah Imba and
178 Nyelang, is the construction of a guest room instead of the tanju' section by the tuai rumah and his deputy (mendal). At Rumah Imba, there are two such rooms, called tiko (from portico, possibly), both fitted with sliding iron-grill doors that are locked when the tiko are not in use.
[353] Pictures of the late parents of the tuai rumah and former colonial officers hang on the outer wall, and windows open from each wall onto the adjacent tanju'. Tikai for covering the padong ruai are stored in the tiko where they are more immediately accessible than in the bilik or sadau.

F. Social Composition of the Longhouse

621 A longhouse community is comprised of a core of cognatic kinsmen
602 and their affines. As descent is reckoned ambilineally and affiliation bilaterally, most of the members of the longhouse are able to establish some degree of relationship to some or almost all the other members of the house. The rationale offered by one informant, Anyau Bakit, was that,

[829] "we know our own and they know us. In former times, people had many taboos and it was easier to get along with people who had the same taboos. Also, with fellow kinsmen, you had some idea about their characters - whether they were good or bad. So, that, if some stranger came to your house, you wanted to find out his background before he took up residence there."

Rumah Nyala at Sungai Aup was founded three generations or approximately sixty years ago by a small group of kinsmen centering around

621 602 [563] through marriage or by construction of their own unit.[16]

Conversely, there is an equal ease of detachment of the individual 621 or family from a longhouse. We have discussed how Noel could return to his natal bilik or leave it depending upon the circumstances in which he found himself. A further extension of this ease of detachment occurs when individual families remove from a longhouse either to attach one another longhouse or to build an individual dwelling. Although gaps in a longhouse structure caused by the removal of a family to another area are not common, [681] still they do occur. By the payment of a token fine of M$30 to each family on either side, a family may remove its section of the longhouse. More often a family will move away, leaving its section of the longhouse standing, with the intention of returning or not returning to it in the future. In such instances no fine is required of the family.

[592] To summarize, in Freeman's words,

> "the fundamental nature of the Iban longhouse community. . . is a free and conditional association of corporate family groups. In other words, being part of a long-house does not deprive a bilek-family of its essential autonomy. In Iban social organization, there is no principle of more vital consequence."

621 342 • 178 C. Longhouse Fragmentation and Individual Dwellings

During the past decade, ten[17] of the longhouses in the 37 in which

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[183] [574] [16] Iban adat chara (law and custom) prescribes that all guests be accepted; and Iban mythology is replete with stories, with positive and negative connotations, of persons entertaining angels and unaware.

[17] Rumah Imba. Nyelang, Tindit, Pengulu Meringgai, Nyambang, Bujing, Pengulu Poh, Buda, Bandang, Luat.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6 Sibu



621 surveys were conducted broke up. The major reason for fragmentation was
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198 in order to build new houses, as the old ones were too dilapidated and beyond repair. Six of the communities built new houses either on the site of the old house or on a site within a distance of three miles of the old house.

Both Rumah Imba and Rumah Nyelang were begun in 1961, after the old house had been abandoned. Formerly, the people in those two houses had lived together in a single attenuated structure. But the distance to farm lands coupled with a feeling on the part of some members that they were being exploited by the shophouse of Tuai Rumah Imba prompted 25 families to begin a new house, Rumah Nyelang, downriver from Rumah Imba.

The residents of Rumah Pengulu Meringgai left their old house on Durin Kanan because it was in bad repair. In 1969, the tuai rumah built his section of the longhouse, to which several other families attached their units. But lack of funds and materials has caused a delay in the attachment of other families, many of whom are living in temporary individual dwellings in the open space beyond the new longhouse.

In the cases of Rumah Tindit of Oya Road and Rumah Buda, Naman, some of the residents have abandoned the longhouse to construct individual houses whereas others have gone together to build a new longhouse. The members of Rumah Pengulu Poh, Pasai, have broken up their longhouses completely, and have built separate houses along the knoll where their longhouse formerly stood.

621 342 178 491 Another factor which has influenced the withdrawal of some members from longhouses has been the construction of the road system, vastly improving communications between Sibu and the hinterland. For example, long before the other members of Rumah Pengulu Meringgai had left the old house, Nyanggau, an ambitious and enterprising young man had moved his family to a roadside site. Similarly, Entili of Rumah Tindit declined to build onto the new house, preferring to construct his residence along the Oya Road.

621 342 178 753 Still another reason which has prompted the breakup of longhouses, though none in this study's sample, has been the belief that a house has become "hot." For instance, in one house in the Kapit District, three members died between January and August, and the residents firmly believed that there was an antu living beneath the house and causing the deaths. When a fourth person died in September, the house was abandoned (rumah bumbus) and the people lived in hastily-erected huts until they could consider and undertake the erection of a new longhouse.

621 342 178 183 Although there is an increase in the number of individual houses which have been built in rural areas by former residents of longhouses,[18] there definitely is no mass abandonment of the longhouse system in favor of separate dwellings. To many Ibans, the young especially, the longhouse system represents a survival of a time past and one that has little meaning or use in

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[18] The 1970 pre-census data list 56 individual Iban dwellings, but this is very low, not taking into account the separation of units in Pasai, or the various tuai rumah, such as Janggu and Ringkai of Assan or Nyambang of Oya Road who have built individual houses. A more accurate figure would be between two- and three-hundred.

621 contemporary society. To others, and still the majority of Ibans, the
342 longhouse system is the jalai pengidup ("way of life") that is most mean-
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183 ingful culturally. The longhouse still is an important center for social events and many persons stated their preference for the crowd and sounds of the longhouse rather than for the loneliness and silence of a separate house.
[796] Further, the longhouse is a ceremonial center for the various gawai, to
[416] which even the newly emerging urban elite, among them some college graduates, return and take part. The mutual aid provided for the events of moment in the life-cycle of the individual has been adduced as another reason for the continuing popularity of the longhouse. And finally, the longhouse continues to provide an aura of security, in reality little, during the present period of terrorist activities.

Thus, the number of people who have left the longhouse community and built individual dwellings in rural areas is still relatively small and dependent upon those factors discussed as well as idio-syncratic reasons.

B. Urban Residence

The movement of an estimated 3,000 Ibans into the Sibu Urban area
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177 has resulted in their dispersion throughout the town and in several patterns
361 of residence. These patterns of residence are related to a number of factors,
[162] including the presence or absence of kinsmen, length of time and purpose for coming to the town, position and income and whether quarters are furnished by the employer.

Industrial Area, where until recently families of the Malaysian Rangers lived, and where several hundred Ibans still live; and in apartments along Mission Road, Tong Sang Road and the other tributaries of Lanang Road. More than 150 Ibans enrolled in urban schools are living in school hostels or renting rooms in the pasar.

In summary, the longhouse system continues to be the predominant type of settlement pattern among the Ibans of this district. For want of accurate statistics, it is impossible to determine exactly how many Ibans have left the longhouse in order to construct individual houses, but an educated estimate permits us to place the figure at between two- and three-hundred families. Of the estimated 3,000 Iban residents in the urban area, most are newcomers and live either in quarters furnished for them or in rented rooms. These residents are fairly evenly scattered throughout the urban area, with concentrations of Ibans near places of employment, schools and apartment houses.

195 Sarawak in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Iban population increase occurred in part by natural increase and in part through the assimilation of captured members of other ethnic groups. The Melanaus, Bajangs and other former occupants of the Rejang valley were driven out, so that today, the Iban occupy what are to them the more desirable territories, and have greater access to towns and markets.

198 441 Within the past ten years, Iban traders have begun to insinuate themselves into spheres of business which previously had been the domain of the Chinese and, to a much lesser extent, the Malays. Whereas two years ago the Iban market was a joking matter among Chinese hawkers, today it is 162 the scene of a great volume of trade. And while the Iban population of [369] Sibu still tends to be a floating one, with individuals coming in to transact business in Government offices, to sell produce, or for treatment at the hospital, the number of Ibans taking up permanent residence is rapidly increasing. In the words of one man who returned to Sibu after two-years' absence,

> "Man, this isn't a Chinese town any longer. It's half Iban!"

666 177 In politics, Iban leaders such as Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah, Thomas Kana, Sidi Munan and Stephen Kalong Ningkan have been prominent in the formation and development of the more indigenous-dominated parties. Unfortunately, in more than a single instance, the strength of individual leaders, the conflict of "big-man" competition, and the lack of a tradition of unity built upon superordinate-subordinate relationships, has proved the undoing of group interests.

867 and young women are taught that their roles in farm, garden and bilik require skill and resourcefulness in providing for their families.

243 554 183 We have described the importance which the Iban attaches to successful farming. The sine qua non for upward social mobility has been until recently continuous success in padi-farming.[1] It is in this area as in no other that the blessings of the gods appears, and men who are successful farmers and know a relative degree of prosperity (betuah-limpah, "with good luck") are invited to pronounce blessings at the gawai, that some of their benefits may spread to others. On the other hand, in traditional Iban culture, though a man might be skilled in other areas such as augury, shamanism or even warfare, if the gods of fortune didn't bless his farm, his ambitions for upper-class recognition foundered.

One member of the newly emerging entrepreneurial class of Ibans, a hard-working and ambitious man, said that the foundations of his success were securely laid.

> "My family has never known a year when we were short or rice (mayah bulan gantong sendok). This is the reason why I have been able to get ahead and stay ahead of the rest of the people in my community: I haven't had to spend money on rice. And other members of the community work for me in my rubber and pepper gardens, in exchange for a gantang (5-1/3 pounds of husked rice."

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22 183 The Iban is expected to show skills in the other tasks performed in making a living, such as fishing, gathering, hunting and acquisition of those things commonly needed.

[178]

[1] Higher education and employment now offer viable alternatives.

18:Sutlive E,M-5 (1957-1971) 1973 OC6 Iban OC6
Sibu



554 basic value of self-sufficiency that emerge in discussions and the respect
183 paid to individual members of the community. Some may possess the tongues of angels, with facile expressions and convincing speech, but unless words are backed by performance, a credibility gap quickly develops. On the other hand, a quiet, unassuming man or woman, who farms well, develops his gardens, and knows how to manage his affairs and persist towards his goals, will achieve respect and considerable influence among his fellows. In their evaluations, the Iban can be cruel critics of failure, but they are covetous respecters of success.

484 In Chapter Two we discussed the importance attached to the role of
554 the pioneer, who overcame climate, jungle and, sometimes, enemies, to open up new land for his descendants and others. The adventure of pejalai has been, among other things, a pioneering experience for young men into new
[178] areas and among new people. Today, the pejalai may be by plane or launch to the Shell oilfields of Brunei or the forests of Sabah or Pontianak, but adventure and travel still are prescribed as part of the lessons for self-sufficiency.

713 To a very uncertain extent, the popular myths[4] of Keling, the god
776 of adventure and warfare, are a recapitulation of the story of the Iban.
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[4] In addition to story-telling (berensera) on the longhouse ruai, numerous books about Keling and his female counterpart, Kumang, have been published by the Borneo Literature Bureau and the myths sometimes are broadcast on the Iban service of Radio Malaysia. Small wonder that my nine-year old son was accused of blasphemy when he suggested to an Iban playmate the possibility that Keling wasn't for real.

567 to test the mettle of the ulun berani. For, unlike the former type of
727 slave, the slave of bravery could be redeemed and adopted as a blood-brother, if judged worthy by observation of his conduct and character.[6]

178 The basic value of self-sufficiency and its sub-categories, to-
436 gether with the concomitant division of Iban society into three classes
[183] based upon success or failure to attain the ideal, has been pre-adaptive for the Iban's participation in a cash economy and entrance into economic
[175] classes recognizable in this pluralistic society. By the end of the second decade of this century, many Ibans in the Sibu District had become money-wise and were aware of the goods money could buy, as well as the security it offered. In his quarterly report, the Resident for the Lower Rejang described the Iban's hoarding of copper coinage (SG No. 767, 16 April, 1919). As early as 1902, the Iban of the Rejang were buying "old Rusa jars" (SG No. 437, 2 June, 1902 p. 125), for amounts ranging from
[411] $100 to $200. The introduction of shotguns resulted in their purchase by thousands of Iban,[7] so that it now is exceptional for a family not to
[556] have at least one shotgun. Jars, different types of brassware such as gongs, pinang containers, condiment trays and lamps, as well as shotguns,

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[6] In a ritual of redemption (tembang or tebus), the slave was freed and his new status declared. At the same time he was given gifts, symbolizing his beginning a new life and relationship to other members of the community.

[7] In the store under the Sibu District Office, thousands of shotgun registration forms are stored.

were early wealth indicators, all requiring cash or a surplus of marketable goods for their purchase.

Although the Iban were quick to perceive the benefits attainable with money, cash has been difficult to come by for a large majority of Iban, and even more difficult to keep. The sale of jungle produce and rubber brought in relatively small amounts of money to individual families, and during the timber boom, much larger sums were acquired by pengulu, tuai rumah and the anembiak redak. But most of such cash was received on an irregular basis, and either found its way almost immediately back into the pockets of Chinese merchants, or was expended on a gawai, to buy name and fame and satisfy cultural demands.

Opportunities for employment in the pasar were severely limited for Ibans during the first half of this century. The Brooke administration discouraged education among the movement of Ibans to the pasar. As Pringle writes,

> "He (Charles Brooke) knew that such abilities would not survive formal[8] education. He also believed that the longhouse people were likely to be corrupted by the sinful practices of the bazaar. He particularly feared that Iban girls, conditioned by the permissiveness of their own courtship customs, would be easily led into prostitution."

In the opinion of one Iban leader, educational opportunities were opened for Iban students only to the Seventh Standard (seven years study)

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[8] Loss of sensitivity and orientation to jungle life, as well as atrophy of mnemonic abilities was feared by the Second Rajah.

871 because of two reasons. First, the Brookes were afraid that the Iban
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175 would lose their traditional culture. Secondly, they were afraid that
829 educated Ibans would be dangerous Ibans, i.e., unwilling to accept without question the paternalistic Brooke administration which was weighted heavily against their advance through its stereotyping of their culture, as well as being heavily pro-Malay.

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658 The cession of Sarawak to the British Government in 1946 resulted in a more open and equitable arrangement for the Ibans. They were permitted access to higher education, and a large number of Local Authority Schools
[369] were built. Whereas previously only a small handful of Ibans lived in Sibu prior to the cession, by 1947 their number was 259 and by 1960, almost 700.

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871 Thus, education and wage-earning offered viable alternatives to the
464 traditional value of self-sufficiency and status according to rice production.
[183] Education, at first even at a Primary 4 or 6 level, later at higher standards, permitted the student to find employment in a number of jobs, ranging from primary school teachers to clerks in Government and companies, and even to attain to senior government positions.

[171]

> "To become a government employee. . .has meant many things: social status (and the titles and uniforms to match), economic security, a comfortable life with relatively modern conveniences, and, essentially, identification with a Western (rather than a native) style of life."

The initial skepticism of many Iban parents about education was overcome by reports of the employment opportunities available to students.

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178 871 464 Of what account were their arguments that their ancestors didn't go to school and yet knew how to grow rice,[9] when confronted with the economic potentials through education? It is small wonder that parents asked for schools for a new formula for success had been comprehended. As one astute Iban put it,

[829] "We quickly discovered that education is money and money is padi, so why cling to one way (i.e., farming) only."

The proliferation of schools in part due to Government's desire, in part due to parental demands, and the accompanying expectations for employment of school-leavers, is a crucial factor in the transition from an ideal of self-sufficiency in rice to one of security through education and wage-earning. Without imputing blame, the initial and early raison d'etre of schools in Sarawak was for training teachers and civil servants. Such was the shortage of educated Sarawakians that even as late as the mid-1950's, achievement of a Primary 4 or 6 education was tantamount to automatic employment. It took several years for this model to be comprehended by many Ibans, but once grasped it has been firmly held.

178 871 464 183 Education, thus, has been a process of disorientation to rural life and orientation to a salaried position, hopefully in an urban area such as Sibu or Kuching. There is little inclination for more highly educated

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[9] An argument that I heard on a dozen or more occasions in the late 1950's when discussions about the establishment of schools took place in some more remote upriver areas.

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students to return to the longhouse, and as we have mentioned, for most young, educated Ibans there is the feeling that the traditional value of self-sufficiency cannot be realized through padi-farming, but rather through cash-employment. In light of this attitude, it is likely that an increasing number of young Ibans will move into this pasar, and that Government's urging of its "back-to-the-farm" policy is futile.

Education and employment are relatively new developments among the Iban, particularly employment on a steady salaried basis.[10] Several results are appearing. First, although kin-ties remain important to Iban mobility, a fraternity of school-mates is also appearing. In listing the person who helped them get employment and find a place to live in Sibu, almost one-quarter (or about 47) of a random sample of 200 indicated a former school-mate (Table 35). Second, among some educated Iban, there is a tendency to disparage their people's traditional culture and to abhor life in the longhouse. Third, there is a tendency for young educated Ibans to identify with the values of other ethnic groups, whose members they emulate whenever possible. We will discuss this later in the chapter when we consider acculturation. Fourth, there is appearing a hierarchy of statuses, in some cases following the traditional class structure of the Iban, in others based upon level of education, type of work, amount of salary and political clout.

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[10] Iban men have gone on pejalai for more than three-quarters of a century, but work on a regular salaried basis is a new feature.

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178 The Iban have had no tradition of political unity, and divisions
554 long have existed between those who were able to achieve to the value of
[619] self-sufficiency, and those who were not. At present, these divisions are being re-interpreted through a translation of the value in terms of education and cash-employment. Fifteen years ago, Richards, a long-time colonial officer and student of the Ibans wrote that,

> "there is now perhaps some risk of a division among the Ibans themselves. . . . There is already a gulf between the rich and the poor, between the Iban who is educated and owns property in plantations and the one who is not educated in the modern sense and has only traditional property. The division and eventual disruption of the community to which I referred earlier will, if it occurs, leave the Ibans weak and defenseless as a community, and lead to their disappearance in the way of the people who preceded them in this country."

The divisions among the Ibans about which Richards wrote are not new phenomena. Rather, they have existed as a part of Iban society and culture for as long as traditional accounts provide us knowledge. The entrance of Ibans into modern society and pasar life with the concomitant alignment with economic classes of other ethnic groups is but a new expression of an old fact. For, according to the value of self-sufficiency, members of the society long have been ranked according to their performances and achievements.

B. Cooperation and Competition

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476 Closely related to the first value of self-sufficiency are the two norms of cooperation and competition. Given the habitat to which the Ibans

183 Egalitarianism is an important traditional norm according to which all Ibans supposedly are equal. Twelve years ago I heard the paramount chief of the Ibans, Temenggong Jugah anak Barieng, bemoan the way in which he and other Iban leaders were same as other members of their society.

[829] "The chiefs of the Kenyah and Kayan sit in their boats and their anembiak paddle for them. We Iban chiefs must paddle along with our people."

[178] These days are past for the Dato Tan Sri Temenggong Jugah, Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs. He and other Iban ministers no longer paddle; they are given police escorts with sirens open.

183 Although the value of egalitarianism still is held by a large
178 portion of Iban society, more mobile and ambitious members are disinclined to subscribe to it. If possible, as with the emerging entrepreneurs in each community, they will exceed their fellows while remaining a part of the
[166] longhouse. But in situations where this proves impossible and where the egalitarian demands of the community frustrate individual ambitions, movement into Sibu or some other part of Sarawak, Brunei or Sabah is likely
[829] to occur. Many young educated Ibans have expressed the feeling that there is no future for them in the longhouse. Their presence by hundreds in Sibu is in part an attempt to achieve upward mobility and greater economic rewards for themselves than are possible in the traditional longhouse situation.

D. Mobility and Opportunism

183 Related to the strong achievement orientation of the Ibans are two other closely associated values, mobility and opportunism. Mobility includes not only the traditional physical shifts of residence related to rice cultivation, but also the transfer of relations among kinsmen and non-kinsmen and changes in cultural values as opportunities for greater exploitation occur. By opportunism I mean the readiness with which most members of the society seize any perceived opportunity for maximization of personal benefit, whether in wage-earning, education, Christianity or politics.

361 At the risk of redundancy I have stressed the high incidence of mobility among the Ibans. The quality of the soils and the practice of slash-and-burn cultivation made necessary their movements each five or six years as the land near their longhouses deteriorated and yields diminished. When distances to the farms became too great or numbers more than could be [178] supported, some members of the community moved to look for new land. This pattern changed only after the Ibans became more sedentary through the shift to wet-rice cultivation, the planting of rubber gardens, and in this District the immigration of thousands of Chinese who became competitors for land.

484 574 The Ibans long have been a people on the move in other ways as well. In addition to the often-mentioned institution of pejalai, visits between kinsmen and friends are made frequently, often as not over relatively great distances. With recent improvements in communications, the incidence of visits is even higher. While men have tended to be more mobile than women, the latter also pay visits, travel to other towns to

183 178 The Ibans are activists and with their orientation to achievement, the more determined ones work to make certain that good luck comes to them. Less reliance is placed upon ubat, pengaroh and engkerabun and more upon education of young people, contacts with kinsmen and friends for exploitation, and awareness of opportunities for obtaining Government grants and [654] employment. Recently, when the Agriculture Department announced that it would give aid to pepper planters, more than 2,800 Ibans made application [464] through the Sibu office.[29] When the Sibu Rural District Office advertised for one position of an office boy, 61 young men, most of the Iban, applied [462] for the job. The division of labor described in Chapter Four in which women do the main work on the farms and men supplement the family's income with wages is an increasing pattern among Ibans of this District to ensure good luck and a good life.

181 183 In summary, the culture of the Ibans has been one of the most important factors in their becoming the most aggressive of the indigenous peoples of Sarawak. Individualists and achievement - oriented through the processes of socialization and enculturation, the Ibans moved into the Rajang subduing, driving out or assimilating the other groups. Motivated by a grammar of values including self-sufficiency and class distinctions

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[29] Ironically, the grants are in the amount of M$ .05 per pepper vine. Most Ibans who make application must pay five dollars to a literate Chinese or Iban to complete the forms for them, and spend on an average of ten dollars in travel and meals, so the grants pay off only when made for more than 300 vines.

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Of the fifty-five members of Rumah Nyala who are wage-earners, seventeen commute daily to Sibu. Fifteen of the commuters are men and two are women.

It is among commuters and their families that the pattern of women doing the farm work and men supplementing the family's income with wages occurs. Unlike permanent residents in Sibu, among whom both husband and wife live in town and depend upon the husband's income, the commuters have realized the advantages of not having to buy their rice and at the same time having cash to buy other food and for other necessities and valuables.

In Rumahs Nyala, Imba and Gaong the main shophouses are maintained by commuters or, in their absence, other members of their families. The men who work in Sibu use the occasion of their daily trips to purchase goods for their shops as well as to dispose of any produce which they may have purchased from members of their communities. The success of each of these shops may be attributed to the diversification of activities - farming, wage-earning and shopkeeping - so that the families have other resources upon which they can call if one or the other fails them. It also may be attributed to the acumen of the men who manage to maintain amicable relations[10] with other members of the community yet at the same time are able to call in payments for debts so that they are not bankrupted by overextension of credit.

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[10]Local jealousies can quickly bring ruin to a business if other members of the community feel for whatever reason that they are being exploited by a fellow.

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light of ecological and structural changes that have occurred. Ibans traditionally had practiced shifting cultivation to which the institutions of pejalai, augury and head-hunting were related. Those who settled for whatever reasons near the fort found themselves in a situation of impeded mobility,[1] and required to undertake new forms of adaptation.

Ecologically, the settlement of Ibans in the District required a shift from dry-rice to wet-rice cultivation among those who settled on the banks of the major rivers. Alternatively, they could farm hill-rice at some distance from their homes. The shift to wet-rice cultivation was an adaptation to the flatter lands and higher water table. New techniques for cultivation of wet-rice fields were learned and were accompanied by the development of a new liturgy suitable for wet-rice cultivation.[2]

Sedentariness and proximity to the town have provided opportunities for the development of new techniques and cultivation. The examples of Chinese and instruction of agriculturalists have helped raise the yields of Iban rice fields. The introduction of pack-sprayers and selective herbicides together with other aid contributed by the Agricultural Department have helped to strengthen the dependence of the Iban farmer upon the pasar.

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[1] Movements continued within the District, but these were involved primarily with the spread of Ibans along the banks of the large rivers or the ascent of their tributaries. Impeded mobility resulted from Government regulations and from the immigration of Chinese settlers.

[2] Comparisons of rituals observed by Ibans practicing dry-rice cultivation and those practicing wet-rice cultivation reveal numerous differences.

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175 At the beginning of this century, recognizing that they were here
361 to stay, Ibans in the Bawang Assan area constructed the first permanent
342 longhouse in memory, the rumah papan ("house of planks"). Previously,
178 house construction had been predicated upon the frequent movements of the shifting cultivators, and was of an impermanent nature. Sedentary settlements of Iban groups have been marked by the erection of substantial longhouses. Although the future of the longhouse domicile may be in question, Iban house-types, whether individual dwelling or attenuated structure, are permanent buildings.

654 A radically new concept of land tenure resulted from the establish-
423 ment of the Lands and Survey Department which claimed the right to re-
177 gister land and to issue permits and titles. In Iban polity land was held under usufruct rights by descendants of a pioneer who cleared it. Land disputes were settled within the longhouse community by appeal to senior members or others who were familiar with migrations and genealogies. Setting up a department to handle land matters represented an incursion of external authority into Iban society, the erosion of traditional polity, and the orientation of its members to the Opis Lan Ensabi as the locus of power in land matters.

177 The Second Rajah's encouragement of Chinese trade and immigration
657 helped to produce a situation he wanted to avoid, in which sociocultural change has taken place among the Ibans. The frequent contacts and long associations of Ibans with Chinese and Malays have led to social and

cultural exchanges from which all have emerged as borrowers. Shortly after the settlement of Ibans in the District, the Rajah's policies encouraging the immigration of Chinese were implemented. Thousands of Foochow, Cantonese and Henghua settlers arrived in the state and began their spread up and down the banks of the major rivers of the Third Division. Although brought into the state to grow rice, the Chinese learned painfully and quickly that rice cannot be grown profitably by hand and that greater gains lay in rubber and pepper. The more astute Ibans were fast to follow the example of the Chinese, planting gardens and harvesting cash incomes from the new crops. The shift to rubber and pepper was a step of both economic and cultural importance. It led to a diversification of incomes from resources more dependable than collection of jungle products. Conservative Ibans saw the shift as one away from rice cultivation and potentially destructive of traditional values (cf. p. 37).

Production of rubber and pepper involved an increasing number of Ibans in the embryonic trade network which grew in Sarawak in the first decades of this century. Heretofore they had exchanged jungle products with Chinese and Malay traders. Rubber and pepper were more reliable products, and often more easily obtainable. Although the Ibans long had exchanged forest produce for such valuables as jars and brassware, the establishment of permanent settlements and more regular incomes from cash crops contributed to an acceleration of this trade.

178 439 Until the last decade or so, the trading network was operated almost entirely by Malays and Chinese. Only they had the external contacts in Singapore, Malaya and Hong Kong to handle imports and exports. Within the past decade, however, Ibans have begun to supplant Chinese traders at the village level. For, more than jars and brassware moved [436] over the trading network. Through the exchange of goods Ibans have acquired an orientation to a cash economy and mercantile mentality, the better to obtain more goods and status.

183 198 The tradtional value system placed a premium on performance in the areas of rice-cultivation and bravery, among men, and weaving skills [462] among women. New values of money and salable materials provided new bases [464] for differentiation between members of Iban society. Employment and [871] education, available principally in urban areas, have eroded traditional values and radically affected Iban social structure.

175 657 167 Although the Ibans were related to the pasar through the trading network and administrative functions which increasingly impinged upon their lives, the Brooke government discouraged the movement of Ibans into the pasar for fear of changes in the traditional society and culture as they had conceptualized them. The Brookes and their officers conceived of themselves as protectors of an Iban ethos which they had stereotyped. The role of the Ibans was cast in terms of the military functions which they might perform and every attempt was made to preserve [871] this role. They were permitted to attend mission schools but there was no encouragement or support from the Brooke government for Iban education.

653 As cash became available to Ibans and other indigenes they had
199 the means for acquiring goods in the pasar. The development of a cheap
167 public transportation system by water and road in the 1960's provided ways to and from the pasar. The sense of distance between longhouse and pasar was reduced as the travel time was shortened, and Ibans who long had been attracted to the pasar began to enter into its activities in increasing numbers. Some have made periodic visits to the pasar, others took up residence. Whereas there had been a reticence on the part of many Ibans to make their homes in the pasar, owing in part to the sense of distance from their fellows and in part to the closed economic system as they perceived it, over the past decade several thousand Ibans have moved from their longhouses to the town. The pioneering efforts of a few Ibans have led the way for many others.

177 Exposure to other ethnic groups and acculturation have led to
361 changes in residence pattern and economic activities among the Ibans of
621 this District. In the rural areas the longhouse domicile remains the
[342] most distinctive characteristic of Iban settlements, but social and physical fragmentation is increasing as more members of the longhouses spend less time in them, and in several hundred cases Ibans have erected
[178] permanent individual dwellings. It is important to note that if the longhouse community declines in favor of separate houses, the seat of the community's meetings and ceremonial activities, and area of socialization, viz., the ruai, will shift. Perhaps it is the other way around and the longhouse is diminishing in significance as less importance is attached to the ruai-centered activities.